



**SEIUHealthcare.**  
United for Quality Care

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Eva Santiago, PCA  
New Britain  
District 1199 New England  
Before the Appropriations Committee

Good Evening Senator Osten, Representative Walker and members of the Committee, my name is Eva Santiago and I am a Personal Care Attendant (PCA) from New Britain. I come before you today to ask you to allocate funding so Home Care workers can be paid living wages and receive better benefits.

I began working as a PCA 15 years ago when I was living in New York. I was interested in companion and homemaker work, and discovered I needed a certificate to do so. Luckily, they offered a certificate and classes in Spanish so I decided to take them. It eventually led me to taking care of my own mother.

Overall, this job is done from the heart. You don't go into this work to make money. Taking care of others is hard work, but for me it is a calling. I love my consumers and I try to care for them like they are my family, because you can only care for people in this line of work with love. As a PCA I help my consumers live their most independent and dignified life. I help bathe them, I cook and feed them, I remind them of doctor's appointments and take them to the doctor, I document every injury or anything that my consumer may have, I fill out forms for the doctor to follow up on care, treatment, and recovery, ultimately I am a life line for my consumer. Our care is the difference between just surviving and living.

Although I love my job it can be very difficult work. Oftentimes I am exhausted physically and mentally at the end of a shift. My job requires me to do a lot of heavy lifting which takes a toll on you. It can be very frustrating to work this hard and to feel undervalued because you're paid so little and not given any health insurance or paid time off. It is draining and unsustainable to work this hard and this struggle to make ends meet or to be unable to take a day off when you're sick because you can't afford it.

With more funding for wages and benefits this job could be a career. At the minimum it would allow people to feel valued, but most importantly we will finally be able to provide for our families. I would feel less worried and stressed about my day to day because I can provide a certain quality of life to my family. We need to make enough to survive and thrive. Right now we are stuck. If I wanted to work more I would put myself and my family at risk as I would be disqualified from certain state help but still too broke to afford anything. Or I can stay living in poverty with no way out.

Livable wages and benefits means that we as caretakers can lead a dignified life and go to work solely focused on our client rather than the one million things that run through your head as a person living in poverty trying to survive. That is all we are asking for. Please do the right thing and allocate this funding so we can finally make the wages and receive the benefits we deserve! Thank you for your time.